



2. The BearVault Invention is included or used in the following products: Model BV110B; Model BV200; Model BV250 Solo; and Model BV300; referred individually and to collectively hereafter as "BearVault Products". See www.bearvault.com for additional information.

3. I have more than thirty (30) years experience in backpacking and hiking, and have extensive knowledge of other bear-proof food storage products in the marketplace.

4. The BearVault Products (the versions sold from December 2003 through the present time) identified in Par. 2 above correlate to at least the currently pending Independent Claims 1, 8, 12, 13, 19, 21 – 23, 25 and 26 of the '677 Application in the manner demonstrated below.

5. The following charts compare each of Independent Claims of the '677 Application to the BearVault Products.

a. Independent Claim 1

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Bear excluding apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude bears from the contents of the product. Each of the BearVault Products is at a minimum SIBBG ("Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group") approved for use with black bears.
a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein,	BearVault Products have a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein.
said aperture having a diameter nearly the full diameter of the body;	BearVault Products aperture has a diameter nearly the full diameter of the body.
a threaded cap having at least one locking element associated therewith;	BearVault Products comprise a threaded cap having a locking element associated therewith.
wherein said cap threads onto or off said body by the action of a human; and	BearVault Products cap threads onto or off the body by the action of a human.
a ridge formed proximate said cap, said ridge having a diameter larger than an outside diameter of said cap and having a region extending upward beyond a lower edge of said cap when said cap is fully threaded onto said body;	BearVault products have a ridge formed proximate the cap. The ridge has a diameter larger than the outside diameter of the cap and has a region extending upward beyond a lower edge of the cap when the cap is fully threaded onto the body.
wherein said body, ridge and cap cooperate to exclude said bear from said interior volume.	The body, ridge and cap of the BearVault products cooperate to exclude bears from the interior volume.

b. Independent Claim 8

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Bear excluding container apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude bears from the contents of the product. Each of the BearVault Products is at a minimum SIBBG (“Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group”) approved for use with black bears.
molded body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein,	BearVault Products have a molded body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein.
said body further comprising first threads and being adapted to withstand forces exerted by said bear;	BearVault Products have a body further comprising first threads and adapted to withstand forces exerted by a bear.
a molded cap having a locking element associated therewith and second threads,	BearVault Products comprise a molded cap having a locking element associated therewith and second threads.
said cap being retained on said body through at least cooperation of said first and second threads; and	The BearVault Products cap is retained on the body through the cooperation of the first and second threads.
at least one exclusion ridge formed on said body proximate said first threads,	The BearVault Products have an exclusion ridge formed on the body proximate the first threads.
said at least one ridge being adapted to substantially shield a gap created between said cap and said body when said cap is threaded at least partly onto said body;	The BearVault Products ridge is adapted to shield the gap created between the cap and the body when the cap is threaded at least partly on the body.
wherein access to said volume by said bear is frustrated by said locking element, said body, said ridge, and said cap.	The BearVault Products utilize the locking element, body, ridge and the cap to frustrate access to the volume of the body by a bear.

c. Independent Claim 12

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Bear excluding apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude bears from the contents of the product. Each of the BearVault Products is at a minimum SIBBG (“Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group”) approved for use with black bears.
a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein,	BearVault Products have a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein.
said body comprising a material of sufficient thickness to withstand the application of forces applied by said bear;	The BearVault Products body comprises a material of sufficient thickness to withstand the application of forces applied by a bear.
a threaded cap having at least one locking element associated therewith,	BearVault Products comprise a threaded cap having a locking element associated therewith.
said cap threading onto said body and forming a gap there between; and	The BearVault Products cap threads onto the body and form a gap there between.

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
a vertically extending exclusion ridge formed immediately proximate said gap,	The BearVault Products have a vertically extending exclusion ridge formed immediately proximate the gap.
said exclusion ridge and said cap cooperating to prevent said bear from gaining access to said gap.	The exclusion ridge and the cap cooperate to prevent the bear from gaining access to the gap of the BearVault Product.

d. Independent Claim 13

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Animal excluding container apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude animals from the contents of the product.
a one-piece body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein communicating with said volume,	BearVault Products have a one-piece body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein communicating with said volume.
said body further being formed of a rigid yet flexible polymer;	The body of the BearVault Products comprises a rigid yet flexible polymer, e.g. polycarbonate.
a tamper-resistant polymer cap, said cap being threaded onto said body and forming a gap there between,	BearVault Products comprise a tamper-resistant polymer cap threaded onto said body and forming a gap there between.
said cap and body cooperating to dissipate forces applied to the exterior of said apparatus by said animal without providing access to said volume; and	The cap and body cooperate to dissipate forced applied to the exterior of the BearVault Products apparatus by an animal without providing access to the volume.
an exclusion ridge proximate said gap, said exclusion ridge denying access to the gap by an animal.	The BearVault Products comprises an exclusion ridge proximate the gap, the exclusion ridge denies access to the gap by an animal.

e. Independent Claim 19

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
A method of operating an animal excluding container apparatus having a body and threadedly engaged low profile cap,	BearVault Products are designed to exclude animals from the contents of the product.
said apparatus further comprising first and second interfering locking elements, the method comprising:	BearVault Products comprise a threadedly engaged wide, short, flat cap.
applying force, using two human hands, to said low profile cap in at least one region to reduce said interference between locking elements; and	The BearVault Products comprises first and second interfering locking elements.
	The BearVault Products require the application of force, by two human hands, to the wide, short, flat cap in at least one region to reduce the interference between locking elements.

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
rotating said cap in cooperation with said act of applying, said rotating causing said locking elements to change relative position thereby allowing further rotation of said cap.	The BearVault Products require the rotation of the cap in cooperation with the act of applying. The rotating action causes locking elements to change relative position thereby allowing further rotation of the cap.

f. Independent Claim 21

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Tamper-resistant container apparatus manufactured by the method comprising:	BearVault Products are tamper-resistant containers.
forming a unitary molded polycarbonate body having an aperture therein and a first locking element thereon;	BearVault Products have a unitary molded polycarbonate body having an aperture formed therein and a first locking element thereon.
forming a nylon cap element adapted to threadedly engage said body, said cap element having a second locking element thereon, and	BearVault Products comprise a nylon cap adapted to threadedly engage the body. The cap has a second locking element associated therewith.
threading said cap element onto said body such that said first and second locking elements cooperate to frustrate subsequent removal of said cap by one or more bears.	BearVault Products are manufactured by threading the cap onto the body such that the first and second locking elements cooperate to frustrate subsequent removal of the cap by one or more bears.

g. Independent Claim 22

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Bear-excluding container apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude bears from the contents of the container. Each of the BearVault Products is at a minimum SIBBG ("Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group") approved for use with black bears.
a molded high-strength polymer body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein,	BearVault Products have a molded high-strength polymer body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein.
said body further comprising first threads and being adapted to withstand forces exerted by said bear;	The body of the BearVault Products further comprises first threads adapted to withstand forces exerted by a bear.
a molded cap having a bottom edge, a locking element, and second threads, said cap being retained on said body through at least cooperation of said first and second threads; and	BearVault Products comprise a molded cap having a bottom edge, a locking element, and second threads. The cap is retained on the body through the first and second threads located on the cap and body respectively.

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
at least one exclusion feature disposed on said body proximate to said bottom edge of said cap and adapted to frustrate access by said bear to a gap formed by said bottom edge of said cap and said body when said cap is threaded at least partly onto said first threads,	The BearVault Products incorporate an exclusion feature disposed on the body proximate to the bottom edge of the cap and is adapted to frustrate access by the bear to a gap formed by the bottom edge of the cap and the body when the cap is threaded at least partly on the first threads.
said exclusion feature further having a diameter larger than said molded cap;	The exclusion feature of the BearVault Products comprises an exclusion feature further having a diameter larger than the molded cap.
wherein access to said volume by said bear is frustrated by at least the individual action of at least one of said locking element, said body, said exclusion feature, and said cap.	The BearVault Products frustrate access to the volume by the bear by the individual action of the at least one locking element, body, exclusion feature and the cap.

h. Independent Claim 23

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Animal excluding apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude animals from the contents of the product.
a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein,	BearVault Products have a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein.
said aperture being nearly the full diameter of said body at said body's widest point; and	BearVault Products aperture has a diameter nearly the full diameter of the body's widest point.
a threaded cap having at least one means for frustrating removal associated therewith; and	BearVault Products comprise a threaded cap having a locking element associated therewith that frustrates removal associated therewith.
a barrier located proximate a gap between said cap and said body, said barrier preventing the intrusion of said gap by an animal;	BearVault Products have a barrier located proximate the gap between the body and the cap. The barrier prevents the intrusion of the gap by an animal.
wherein said cap threads onto said body, and is configured to be removed with two hands.	The cap threads onto the by and is configured to be removed by two hands on the BearVault Products.

i. Independent Claim 25

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Animal excluding apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude animals from the contents of the product.
a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein;	BearVault Products have a body having an interior volume and an aperture formed therein.

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
a threaded cap having at least one means for frustrating removal associated therewith, said cap forming a gap with said body;	BearVault Products comprise a threaded cap having a locking element that frustrates removal associated therewith. The cap forms a gap with the body.
an exclusionary ridge located proximate said gap, said ridge preventing moisture intrusion into said interior volume; and	The BearVault Products comprise an exclusionary ridge located proximate the gap. The ridge prevents moisture intrusion into the interior volume.
a plurality of surface elements disposed on an exterior surface of said body;	The BearVault Products contain a plurality of surface elements disposed on the exterior surface of the body.
wherein said cap threads onto said body; and	The BearVault Products have the cap thread onto the body.
wherein said plurality of surface elements are adapted to provide retention of one or more restraining devices.	The BearVault Products plurality of surface elements is adapted to provide retention of one or more restraining devices.

j. Independent Claim 26

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
Animal excluding apparatus, comprising:	BearVault Products are designed to exclude animals from the contents of the product.
a substantially transparent polycarbonate body comprising:	BearVault Products have a substantially transparent polycarbonate body.
a threaded region having a first height;	BearVault Products have a threaded region having a first height.
an interior volume; and	BearVault Products have a body with an interior volume.
an aperture formed in said body proximate said threaded region, said aperture being comparable in diameter as an outer diameter of said body;	BearVault Products have an aperture formed in the body proximate the threaded region. The aperture is comparable in diameter to the outer diameter of the body.
an exclusionary ridge formed as part of said polycarbonate body and located proximate said threaded region; and	BearVault Products have an exclusionary ridge formed as part of the polycarbonate body and located proximate the threaded region.

Claim Recitation	BearVault Products
a nylon threaded cap adapted for mating with said threaded region and having at least one apparatus configured to frustrate unwanted removal of said cap from said body, said nylon cap further having a diameter at least that of said aperture, and a vertical profile substantially similar to that of said threaded region of said body, said cap and said body producing a gap when said cap is threaded onto said body;	BearVault Products have a nylon threaded cap adapted for mating with the threaded region and having at least one apparatus configured to frustrate unwanted removal of the cap from the body. The nylon cap further has a diameter at least that of the aperture, and a vertical profile substantially similar to that of the threaded region of the body. The cap and body produce a gap when the cap is threaded onto the body.
wherein said substantially similar vertical profiles frustrate unwanted removal of said cap by a transverse load generated by a bear;	The substantially similar vertical profiles of the BearVault Product frustrate unwanted removal of the cap by a transverse load generated by a bear.
wherein said exclusionary ridge prevents said bear from accessing said gap; and	BearVault Products have an exclusionary ridge that prevents the bear from accessing the gap.
wherein said ridge, cap and body cooperate to substantially restrict moisture intrusion into said interior volume.	The ridge, cap and body of the BearVault Product cooperate to substantially restrict moisture intrusion into the interior volume.

6. I have complete access to and personal knowledge of BearVault's confidential sales information related to the BearVault Products.

7. I have read the '677 Application.

8. I have been asked to submit this declaration to demonstrate the commercial success of the BearVault Products.

9. As a result of my position with BearVault, I am familiar with BearVault's past and present products and consumer preferences in the Backpacking and Hiking markets.

10. Until BearVault introduced the BearVault Products, there was a salient unsolved need in the area of protecting food storage from bears during hiking and camping trips, and for a cost effective container that was lighter weight, larger capacity, while at the same time providing the aforementioned "bear-proof" capability. The invention of the '677 Application solves this need by satisfying these aforementioned deficiencies in the prior art. The BearVault Products

have been extremely well received by BearVault's customers and reviewers who are taking advantage of the unique capabilities of BearVault Products. See attached **Exhibit A**.

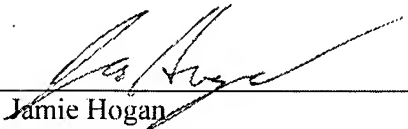
11. In 2003, BearVault began full distribution of the BearVault Products, which is used in accordance with the teachings of the '677 Application, and specifically the various claimed inventions as set forth in Par. 5 above.

12. During the fiscal year of 2003 (for the month of December only), approximately 148 units incorporating the BearVault Invention were sold. Extrapolated sales figures for year 2003, had they been sold the entire year, would have been approximately 1,776 units. **Sales of BearVault Products incorporating the BearVault Invention have increased dramatically over successive quarters, and through the first 11 months of fiscal year 2005, BearVault sold approximately 11,350 BearVault products, an average of nearly 1,031 products per month, resulting in a percentage increase in total BearVault unit sales of 696% on a monthly average scale.** For fiscal year 2004, 7,689 BearVault units were sold, a monthly average of over 640 units per month, a monthly average increase of 432% over December 2003 unit sales. *See attached Exhibit B.*

13. The BearVault Products models BV200, BV250 Solo and BV300 are approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC), and/or Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group (SIBBG), which are the cognizant testing and approval authorities for use of such Products in, *inter alia*, U.S. National Parks.

14. All statements made herein of my own knowledge are true, and all statements made on information and beliefs are believed to be true. These statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such

willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.



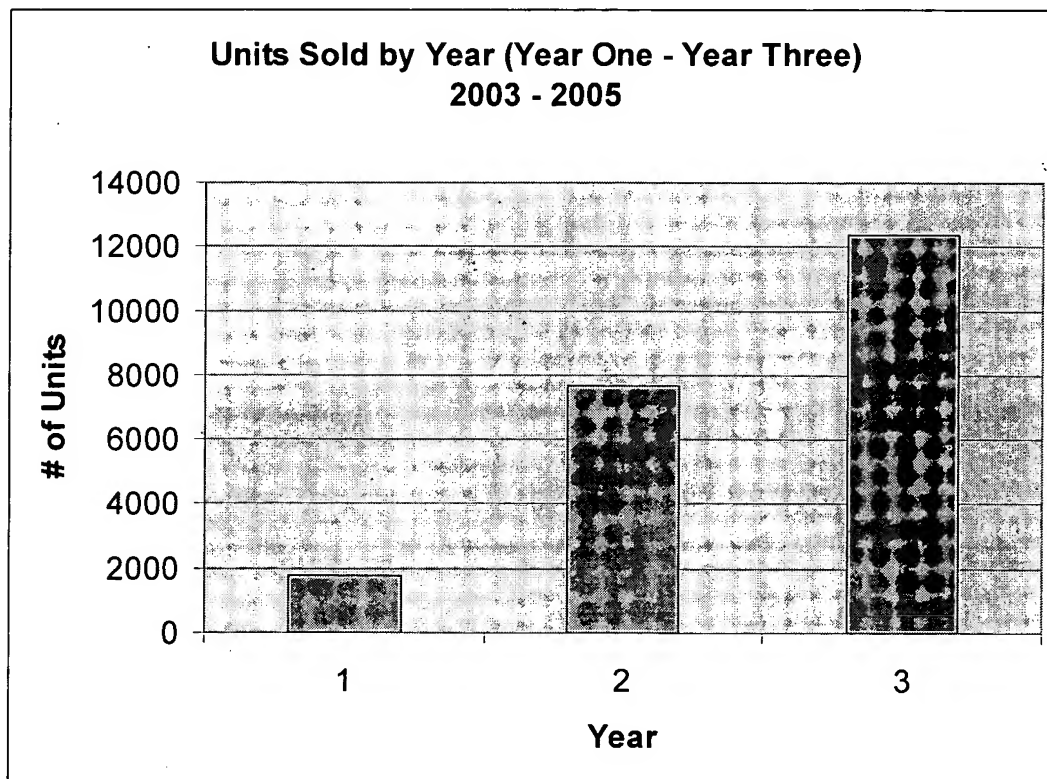
Jamie Hogan
Inventor of '677 Application, and
Owner – BearVault

DATE: 27 JAN 06

Exhibit B

Gross Unit Sales Figures

BearVault Unit Sales	Year Sold
1,776 ¹	2003
7,689	2004
12,380 ²	2005



¹ BearVault sales in 2003 were only made in the month of December. A total of 148 units were sold during that month. The number above has been extrapolated to estimate annual sales volume for comparison between years 2004 and 2005.

² BearVault sales in 2005 were extrapolated to reflect anticipated full year 2005 sales. As of November 2005, 11,350 units of the BearVault product had been sold.

Exhibit A

Reviews and Comments by users of the BearVault

Product Review

"BearVault – Lighter, more spacious, easier to us--you win, Yogi loses."

April 2004

- <http://backpacker.com/gear/article/0,1023,7055,00.html>

Product Review

"BearVault BV100 Food Canister REVIEW"

- <http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/00318.html>

Product Review

"Product review of the BearVault BV110B and BV200"

- <http://www.backpackgeartest.org/bearvault/>

Product Review

"BearVault Bear Canister Review"

- <http://stuff.silverorange.com/archives/2004/september/bearvaultbear>
- See also: http://www.bearvault.com/bearvault_reviews.php
- See also: http://www.bearvault.com/bearvault_testimonials.php



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BearVault BV110B Canister Owner Review

Review Date: April 17, 2005

Name: Steve Paski

Age: 56

Gender: Male

Height: 5' 7", 1.7 m

Weight: 170 lb, 77 kg

Email address: grzldvt@pacbell.net

City, State, Country: San Jose, CA USA

Backpacking Background:

I started backpacking in the summer of 1987. A vast majority of the trips have been in the Yosemite Area introducing my kids to the outdoor world. During the summers I generally hit the trail two times a month, doing weekends or three day trips, with a major five to ten day trip towards the end of each summer.

The trips lately have been cross country into other locations in the Sierra, exploring areas that might not normally be seen and trying to find the rare big views.

My backpacking style ranges from light on the shorter trips to the kitchen sink on longer trips. I do enjoy small luxuries, chairs, lanterns, extra clothes, if I am out for multiple days and am willing to put time into physical conditioning to support the extra load.

Product Information

Manufacturer: BearVault

Model: BV110B

Year of Manufacture: 2004

URL: <http://www.bearvault.com>

Listed weight: 2 lb 6 oz (1.08 kg)

Weight as delivered: 2 lb 6 oz (1.08 kg)

Dimensions:

Diameter = 8.5" (21.8 cm) Height = 12" (30.5 cm)

Opening Diameter = 7.25" (18.4 cm)

Volume = 693 cu in (11,356 cc)

Measured Volume = 693 cu (11,356 cc)

MSRP: \$79.95 USD

Product Description

The BearVault is a polycarbonate canister used to store food and other aromatic articles in areas where bears are prevalent. This canister can hold about seven days of food when packed correctly. To get seven days worth of food in a canister, I will rearrange bulky foods into several zipper lock snack size or storage bags. This gives me the flexibility to fill smaller open spaces versus having one big bag take up a large amount of space. Flat and flexible foods also add to the space savings as they will conform to the canister's shape and take up less room.

~~A real advantage to this canister is the clear housing.~~ It allows me to find a particular item without having to pull everything out. I may have to take everything out anyway if the item is located at the bottom, but the clear housing really helps locate it.

~~The screw-on-top makes it easy to remove and put back-on.~~ It eliminates fumbling for an opening tool other brands of canisters need. Some canisters require the use of something flat (Quarter, dime, or small screwdriver) to unscrew the latches. I have a tendency to lose those, and end up rummaging through my pack looking for anything that might work or borrowing something from a fellow camper.

~~It is rain-proof and will keep food dry if standing upright, eliminating the need for a plastic liner.~~ However, it will slowly fill with water if tossed in a lake or river. With other canisters I have had to use a plastic liner to keep the food dry. The liner takes up unwanted space, reducing the volume of storage. I have turned other style canisters upside down to

keep the food dry, but if it gets knocked around or turned over while raining, water will get inside. I have not had to use a liner with the BearVault.

The canister can be kept inside the pack or strapped to the outside. It has a roughed up band at each end that give the straps something to grab onto. According to the manufacturer this prevents the straps from slipping off and having the canister fall off the pack. I have not hiked with the canister strapped to the outside of my pack, but did come across someone who had, and he told me he did not have any issues with the straps slipping off the roughed up bands.

Field Information

I used the BearVault last season on several trips and found it matched the manufacturer's claims.

Glen Aulin, Yosemite, CA

This was a three day trip and the first time using this canister. It is not a matter of "will" we see a bear, it is a matter of what time and how many. As with previous trips and other canisters, bears would come into camp, inspect it, and move along. We did have one bang it around a bit, but was unsuccessful in breaking it open and left. I suspect it had something to do with the clear base and food can be seen inside, giving it some hope of success. The fact that it did not hang around very long and force us to chase it off made me happy with the purchase.

Lake Tahoe Desolation Wilderness – October 2004

This was a six day trip, where the miles were not killer so we bulked up on food and did not worry too much about weight. It was great to be able to find the snacks I had cravings for without having to pull everything out. The small things had a tendency to drift to the bottom, so the clear housing was great for locating them. I did have some trouble getting the top unscrewed if dirt got into the threads. I used a towel to clean the threads and all was well again.

There was no problem getting all the food in the canister for a six day trip. I do my own bulky homemade dinners and had no problems getting everything in by breaking them up into smaller bags.

One morning I woke up to a noise that sound like someone was tapping on the canister. I looked out of my tent and there was a Steller's Jay, pecking away at the canister trying to get the food inside, one disadvantage of the clear housing.

Summary

I am a huge fan of bear canisters and I like the BearVault. The clear base makes it easy to find things. Its size definitely makes a difference on trips longer than six days. Previously we had to avoid areas where canisters are required, or stay out of an area until everything fit and venture back in. I find it fits inside my pack without too much difficulty, but can easily be strapped to the top. I like the fact that it is lighter than others in its size and price range. There are lighter ones available, but the cost is double to triple of the BearVault.

As a side benefit, if the top is screwed down tight, the canister can serve as a nice campstool. After forgetting to bring my campstool and potentially spending many days sitting on rocks and logs, this was pretty nice to have.

Things I don't like:

1. Clear Base – Allows animals to see what's inside
2. Threads on the top can get gritty and make it difficult to open
3. A bit large for short trips

Things I do like

1. Keeps my food from being taken by animals
2. Screw on top is convenient – no opening tools needed
3. Clear Base – Allows me to find things inside much easier than solid colored bases.
4. The larger size allows me to get more in the canister, extending the trip length, and not forcing me to hang items that won't fit.

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BearVault

BOOK

Lighter, more spacious, easier to use--you win, Yogi loses.

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April 2004

B

Our relationship with bear canisters used to go something like this: Love Yosemite, love Alaska, hate the bulky plastic canisters required for safe food storage. Our relationship has changed. After using the BearVault on a weeklong-Sierra trip, our affection for bear-country backpacking is unconditional. Here's why.

GEAR



list: (?)

• Bear

FREE EMAIL

Username:

Password:

Logon

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password?

>> It's lighter than other sub-\$100 canisters we've tested, yet there's more usable space (up to 7 days' worth of food for one hiker).

>> The screw-on lid requires no tools to open or close, and the waterproof seal keeps contents dry come rain or deep stream crossings.

>> A wide opening and clear plastic construction make retrieving food easy.

>> Built-in strap guides let you lash the canister securely to your pack.

Price: \$80

Weight: 2 lbs. 7 oz.

Contact: (866) 301-3442; www.bearvault.com.

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BearVault BV100 Food Canister REVIEW

BY the Product Review Staff

Overview of the BearVault

The BearVault is a "7-day" bear resistant food canister made of transparent polycarbonate - and you will immediately see its resemblance to a bigger, fatter, Nalgene bottle. The BearVault is easy and efficient to pack, and for \$80 and considering that it's SIBBG-approved, it's the best sub-\$100 canister available.

Performance Review

Opening and closing the lid. The BearVault's primary 'technology feature' is its lid. Akin to the childproof tops of pharmaceutical bottles, the tightened BearVault lid won't turn counterclockwise until you apply downward pressure on it. The technique isn't difficult to learn in the warmth of your home, but we found that using cold, dry hands on an extended trek made opening the lid a little tough. Our solution? Use a glove or mitt with a grippy surface, and all was well.

The BearVault lid is engineered with some key features in addition to the one-way rotation. When closed, the lip edge of the lid remains recessed in a well-fitted groove of the main container, making it impossible for a bear to hook a fang or claw underneath the lip and crack it. Smart engineering! In addition, the lid seals well and we had no problems keeping our food dry when the BearVault was left outside in a heavy rain, regardless of its orientation. Water resistance (and presumably, *some* odor resistance) is achieved by a softer inner gasket that seals the threads.



The only serious problem we had with the BearVault was the condition where the threads become wet from rain, and then froze overnight. The canister was impossible to open the next morning. Fortunately, it withstood some thawing over our stove and the situation did not evolve into a crisis. Lesson: keep the threads dry on cold nights.

Odor Resistance. We slathered a 12x15 ALOKSAK in the BearVault with honey, sausage, and kibbles, closed it shut, and washed the outside well in soap and water, and then placed it in a dog kennel for the Black Lab sniff test (not a standard method). The curious lab batted the BearVault around the kennel a bit, got bored, and went back in her dog

house. We repeated the same test - sans Aloksak - and the dog tried to lick her way through the polycarbonate (uh, yeah, that would be an indicator that the canister is not odor proof). For the record, canisters from Garcia and Bearikade have also failed the test. Lesson: consider lining any bear canister, or storing your food in, odor proof storage bags. *Conflict of Interest Disclaimer: We like Aloksaks, obviously, because we sell them in the store, but if you are wholly opposed to being tainted by this pitch for them, order some catheter bags from a medical supply house. That's what we used for years. And, yeah, they work!*

Usable volume. This is where the BearVault really shines. A wide opening that is 85% of the inside diameter means that you can efficiently pack food inside with little lost volume. With proper food planning (high density foods), repackaging, and careful packing, you can expect to pack 6 to 8 days of food (2,500 calories per day).

Long term durability. After a few hundred miles of hard use, the BearVault looks like a weathered Nalgene bottle - heavily scratched with a dulled surface. Is this surprising? Should anybody really care about cosmetic appearance? We see this as a benefit, actually: rapid cosmetic wear accelerates your reputation as a hardcore user.

Of more importance is the consequence of having grit entrapped in the threads of the lid. We accidentally (and then purposefully) closed the canister lid with some sandy soil in the threads, and then tightened it shut. The consequence of this the next morning was a maddening effort to unscrew the lid. The sand grains had evidently entrapped themselves in the soft plastic threads of the lid, making opening difficult. Only with one set of grippy mittened hands holding the canister and another set of grippy gloved hands trying to unscrew the lid were we successful. Lesson: keep the threads clean.

We do not anticipate durability problems with the BearVault. We packed ours with 12 pounds of food and tossed it down a 75 foot limestone cliff. It bounced a few times off the rocks, a few more times on impact, and came to rest with only a few deep scratches in the polycarbonate. The same test with a Garcia Backpacker's Cache caused that canister to crack on impact.

Strapping to a pack. The BearVault has a series of raised dimples, on each end, around one-fourth of the circumference, used to keep in place straps used to fix the BearVault to the backpack. Dimples are spaced 1" apart, so naturally, 1" wide straps work the best. Of course, 1" wide straps are also heavy, and lightweight hikers will prefer to use a thinner strap (or even nonelastic cord). Unfortunately, the dimples are not very effective at keeping thinner straps fixed if hiking is rough. The straps work loose (a natural consequence of stretching or sliding through buckles, especially in rain), and slip over the dimples. In addition, the dimples only decorate one-fourth of the circumference, and we had the BearVault rotate over the course of a long day to the point where dimples were no longer keeping thin straps in place. In fairness, we had no such issues when using 1" straps, and thus, recommend them and remind you that some straps must be included as part of the weight of the canister if you expect to strap it to the outside of your pack. Lesson: use a pack large enough to put the canister inside - it will improve your load distribution anyways!

BearVault Specifications

- Capacity (measured): 380 (+/- 0.5%) fl. oz. (11.2 L)
- Weight (measured): 38.8 oz (1.01 kg)
- Outside Diameter (measured): 8.7 in (22.1 cm)
- Inside Diameter (measured): 8.5 in (21.6 cm)
- Length (measured): 12.5 in (31.8 cm)
- Material: polycarbonate
- Color: transparent blue body, opaque black lid
- Lid Closure Type: "Childproof" screw-top
- MSRP: \$80

Certifications

As of February 2004, the BearVault has received certification from the Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group (SIBBG). Certification is pending for grizzly bear resistance.

Product Comparison

The BearVault's closest competitor is the Garcia Backpacker's Cache (Model 812). The BearVault has a slightly

higher volume-to-weight ratio (9.7 fl. oz. / oz., vs. 7.7 fl. oz. / oz.). Plus, the BearVault offers more usable volume with a cleaner design that allows you to pack food more efficiently. In spite of the fact that the BearVault is only 10% larger than the Backpacker's Cache, the more efficient design means a full extra day of food for most hikers. We could easily fit 8 days of high density foods (meusli, gorp, dry meats, pastas, soups, etc.) in the BearVault vs. about 6.5 days of the same type of food in the Backpacker's Cache.

BearVault claims that their canister is easier to strap to the outside of a pack with the built in (dimpled) strap guides, while the Garcia Backpacker's Cache requires an additional carrying case. For most conditions, this is a valid claim, but the dimples could benefit from being somewhat larger - we lost our BearVault down a talus slope on a fall when the canister worked its way loose from thin straps.

The BearVault's biggest disadvantage is its size. At 12.5" in length, it can be a tight squeeze in today's lower volume ultralight packs. Strapping the canister to the outside of internal frame packs is a poor choice for load distribution, and we'd prefer a canister that was just a tad smaller - 8" in diameter and 11" in length would have been ideal - and certainly better suited to the weekend hiker with a smaller pack.

Our favorite feature: a lid with an opening diameter that is nearly the same as the canister! One of the most miserable experiences in carrying the Garcia is dealing with the small opening and trying to efficiently pack food along. For this reason alone, the BearVault should earn your attention - it's just plain easy to use.

Summary

The BearVault is a solid-performing food canister that overall, exceeds the performance of its primary competitor, the Garcia Backpacker's Cache. We do wish the canister was slightly smaller (or that there was a smaller weekend version), and opening the lid with cold dry hands while trying to grip the canister wearing slick pants is tricky. Don't get water in the screw threads on freezing nights, and keep the lid out of the sand, too. These faults aren't going to earn the canister any editor's choice awards from us, but the overall design, quality, and packing efficiency is superb, and the BearVault belongs on the short list of any hiker traveling to wilderness areas with truly habituated bears (California), or national parks featuring sensationalized media attention (Northern Rockies).


Citation:

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BearVault Bear Canister Review

by [Dan James](#) [10:19 AM September 14, 2004] - [1 reply](#)

PRODUCT:

BearVault Black Bear Resistant Food Cannister ([company site](#))

WHAT'S GOOD:

Light, durable, transparent, black bear resistant.

WHAT'S BAD:

Expensive (~\$80.00 USD).



This summer I had the pleasure of hiking numerous times in both the Adirondacks of New York and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Before my first venture in the mountains this spring I purchased two Bear Vaults to protect our food supply for a four day trek. At eighty dollars (USD) a piece they were not cheap pieces of equipment. But who can put a price on protecting my granola bars and fruit-to-gos?!

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Any outdoor types know as well as I do that for the majority of hiking destinations in North America that properly hanging your food will protect it from bears. In some areas though, due to talented black bears, it's absolutely necessary to have a cannister. In other places it's the law.

The BearVault is pretty much just a huge Nalgene for your food. Like a Nalgene It's made out of polycarbonate so it won't shatter and is impact resistant (I would say that these comments are on the safe side. These things can take a beating). The vaults have a large flat screw on lid. This is what keeps the bears out. The lid is designed so that it clicks past tabs when fully screwed on. It's also a VERY big lid. The design is one that makes it awkward if not impossible for our friend the black bear to open but not impossible for us opposable thumb types.

~~The vaults are quite light for their size.~~

Surprisingly light at 2lbs and 6 oz. I found that the vault slipped in quite nicely to the top portion of my 60 liter pack. It was also great to have a waterproof container to put dry clothes in (in a zip-lock bag so they didn't absorb food smell). Towards the end of longer trips its nice to have a waterproof place to put all of our garbage.

~~Around camp they are a godsend.~~ I've used the vaults as stools, chairs, cutting boards, tables, water jugs, and hammers. Just having a flat surface in camp is a treat. Another handy feature is that they are transparent. You can see what you're reaching in for. Other cannisters I've used are a solid plastic and you have to fish everything out/around to find what you're looking for.

Now I know what you're thinking. How can you do a good review of a bear cannister without having it attacked by bears? I'm way ahead of you. While camping this summer by Lake Colden in the High Peaks region of the Adirondacks my BearVaults were put to the test. For those who don't know, this area is notorious for its black bears. We placed our BearVaults a fair distance

from our camp site. In the middle of the night I woke up to hear smashing sounds coming from the direction of our vaults. Thuds came from the vaults smashing into the soil. Loud bangs from the vaults hitting each other and hitting the fallen trees that we had placed them beside. For a good hour these sounds drifted over to our campsite. Then they stopped. In the morning I found the BearVaults 10-15 feet from where I had left them. They were dirty, one had a small scratch on it, but other wise they were intact and the food within in them untouched.

For the peace of mind alone I'll continue to use the BearVaults on hiking trips. It's nice to not have to worry about hearing your bear bag and its precious contents hit the ground in the middle of the night. These vaults are highly recommended if you are planning on being in black bear country overnight.

[Buy the Bearvault from Amazon.com](#)

Replies to Dan James's post: BearVault Bear Canister Review

Jacob [7:04 PM September 14, 2004]

jacob@jacobdockendorff.com

<http://www.socialrevolver.com>

I know you already mentioned it but I think it is worth repeating that the vaults themselves are great for fitting down into your pack. Rather than having a bunch of loose zip-lock bags in your pack you get this neat cannister. It goes in and comes out easily and saves much time and frustration when you need to find something in your bag or, as mentioned above, you are in need of a dry storage area.

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